MULTIMEDIA UNIVERSITY

STUDENT ID NO

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FINAL EXAMINATION

TRIMESTER 2, 2015/2016

LML0015- MALAYSIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

(All sections / Groups)

9 March 2016
2.30 p.m- 4.30 p.m
(2 Hours)

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. This question paper consists of 8 pages with 2 Sections only.
2. Answer **ALL** questions in the answer booklet.

SECTION A: LITERATURE [60 MARKS]

Question I: Short story (30 marks)
Based on the short story, answer all questions.

A QUESTION OF DOWRY
by Siew-Yue Killingley

There was much excitement in Mrs. Ramachandran's household. The daughter of the house, Sivasothie, was going to be engaged. The festive air was laden with the spicy smell of curries and *wades* sizzled in the *kwali* saucepan. The young lady of the house as befitted her present condition, assumed a calm pose amidst the general bustle and noise. Mrs. Ramachandran flew here and there, as fast as her hundred and sixty pounds would allow her, and helped with her commanding suggestions.

'Don't put too much coconut milk in at once, Ayah! It's got to go in by stages. The last bit-the richest part, must be kept to the last! Now, Tamby, go out and play but don't dirty your shirt. What will Uncle Thiruchelvam think if you're dirty?'

Just then, Mr. Ramachandran came into the kitchen and beckoned to his wife. She went out dutifully, for she managed her husband well-obeying him in the little things with such readiness that he thought himself lord of everything else as well. In their room, Mr. Ramachandran asked his wife where she had put the chain which they were giving their daughter as a personal present. Mrs. Ramachandran went up to her cupboard and unlocked an iron casket in which were many glittering trinkets. From the mess of glitter, she extracted a heavy gold chain carved rather much in detail. She sighed with contentment.

'Thiruchelvam's mother and his double-tongued sister can't possibly mistake the value of this necklace. I'm glad we decided to give this. It can be kept for her daughter when she gets married. Thiruchelvam's mother! What a grasping woman she is so surprising that she should be one, because her husband earns so much a month. Her son is more like his father, thank goodness! I'm sure she takes most of his salary now but then, doctors always have a lot-though he'd better think twice before giving too much to his mother now, since he's going to have a family of his own soon. Oh, Ramachandran! You must have a talk with that young man some time and give him a few helpful hints on how to save for his future family. You see, he's got to realize that his sons must have a good education, and that his daughters must have enough dowry. These young men never realize what they should do for their future and for their families.

'Well, Ramachandran, I leave all this to you, you can handle everything so well, especially young people, I always say! Anyway, you have done well by our daughter! Twenty thousand dollars is not to be scoffed at, that's more than I can say for what Thangathurai gave his daughter when our son married her and she had only passed her Form IV too! I was never for that match-but Arul has always been a stubborn and unfilial boy how could he insist on choosing his own wife? Well, that's past. Now, I really must leave you. There's so much work to see to.'

Mr. Ramachandran had been trying to get a word in, and when his wife paused for breath (for she was really going to continue), he grabbed his chance.

'We have to return the necklace.'

'Return it? Why, what will Thiruchelvam's mother and-'

Mr. Ramachandran raised his hand.

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'There's something which I've wanted to tell you for some time, but I didn't want to worry you. We can't pay for the necklace. Do you remember the land we were going to sell to get the dowry and money for the necklace?

'Oh, be careful, you old man! Do you want people to think that we have no money for our daughter?' Mrs. Ramachandran hissed in fierce whispers. Then, continuing in a more normal tone, she inquired loudly, 'Which piece of land do you mean? My father gave us four for my dowry, and our second son received three as his wife's dowry.'

'Come now, wife!' remonstrated Mr. Ramachandran. 'Don't you remember? We have only one piece of land left from your dowry, we sold the other three for our third and fourth son's weddings. You asked me to do it yourself. As for Anandakrishna's land, that belongs to him, and he's already rented it out to some householders in order to get cash for his eternal drinks.'

Afraid of further secrets being revealed to prying ears, and being anxious to save her family's face, Mrs. Ramachandran motioned to her husband to drop the subject. However, Mr. Ramachandran continued.

'About the land, I'm afraid it is impossible to sell it at a quarter of its former price. You see, water has been seeing out from some well for about ten years, and so the land is now too marshy for house-holding. Unless we were to drain it, no one would buy it at our sum.'

'Are you insulting my poor father? He gives me a piece of sodden land? Impossible! Oh, if he had known what sort of a son-in-law he was getting, he would have made a wiser decision. But I shall have a better son-in-law who'll not depend on his wife's dowry. He's a doctor, and he has his own income!'

With that she stalked out, after having locked the gold chain security in its container again. Mr. Ramachandran looked worried, but resigned. He always found himself at a loss for words when his wife was most eloquent.

Mrs. Ramachandran called to her daughter, and the latter came dutifully from the chaste quiet of her bedroom.

'Sivasothie, you are a very lucky girl. You'll have a doctor for your husband-and Mrs. Muthu will have a fit from envy. But you are so much better than her daughter. Now! Thiruchelvam is coming in half an hour, and-well, you're nicely dressed, I see. Do pin up the jasmine flowers-they're too drooping on your left side-there! That's better, oh, why did you move? Look what you've made me do. You've made me knock two off, no matter! This looks better-not so crowded. He loves you very, very much his father told your father so'

Sivasothie looked shy and glanced away with a modest droop of the head. Tamby yelled: 'Peria akka! Uncle Thiruchelvam has come to see you! Peria akka! He's waiting for you in the hall! I've told him you've been waiting for the last two hours.'

The two women were horrified. Mrs. Ramachandran snatched the happy Tamby as he danced into the room and spanked him hard.

'Silly boy! Don't should those fibs. Why, your sister has been hard at work in the kitchen' (this very loudly). 'Just because she looks so fresh and tidy, it doesn't mean she wasn't working. Do you think she's so lazy as to sit and not do anything? Go out and play.'

Tamby hurried off, surprised and unbelieving. Sivasothie and her mother went out into the hall, where the former, permitting herself the most modest of glances at her ardent pursuer, and permitting him to receive from her the merest minimum of shy smiles, shuffled discreetly and retiringly into the kitchen.

'Good morning, Auntie', said Thiruchelvam, 'I've come to see Uncle Ramachandran. He rang me up this morning.'

'Please sit down and I'll get Sivasothie to fetch you a drink. Do taste some muruku. They're newly-made and crisp, Sivasothie is so clever-but of course', she added coyly and

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slyly, 'you know that! Sit down! Sit down! Make this your home, though it's not comparable to yours, of course. And how is your dear mother? I must go and see her soon-we'll have so much to talk about. But that's not surprising-we have the same interest-and that, of course is your happiness. Now, do sit down and I'll ask-

'No, no, please don't bother. I'm very busy, and I must see Uncle Ramachandran and go. Do call him down, please.'

Mrs. Ramachandran knew when not to cross a person and she gave in with good grace.

'Well, I'm sure you have a lot to discuss; so I'll fetch him for you.'

Thiruchelvam sat down awkwardly, attempting not to show his annoyance. What a silly mother-her daughter's modest airs-did Mrs. Ramachandran have them when she was young too? Well, a man had to have a wife, so why not have one with a reasonable dowry?

Mr. Ramachandran came in with his wife, and after a further pleasantry on the latter's part, she departed for the kitchen. Mr. Ramachandran then proceeded to tell his future son-in-law what he had already told his wife earlier. Thiruchelvam, having less faith in Mrs. Ramachandran's father, believed the news about the devalued land.

After Thiruchelvam had left for his dispensary, Mr. Ramachandran had to let his wife and daughter know about the changed situation.

'Well', commented Mrs. Ramachandran stoically, 'there's more than one doctor in our community, and it's up to you, Ramachandran, to do your duty as a father.'

Sivasothie went into the kitchen, her head bowed modestly.

(Extracted from http://smartelibrary.com/elibrary/ebooks/malaysian%20education/Intes//english.pdf)

1. It can be said that in these modern times, tradition and culture often struggle to stay relevant. However culture very much takes centre stage in the above text. Elaborate on two cultural stereotypes that appear in the story. (6 marks)

2. *"Feminism is a range of movements and ideologies that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve equal political, economic, cultural, personal, and social rights for women."*

   With reference to the above statement, provide two examples from the text that support the idea of feminism. Explain how each example relates to the ideology. (6 marks)

3. One of the conflicts faced by man is between him and society. Elaborate on the conflict between man vs society based on the text. Provide evidences from the text to support your answer. (6 marks)

4. *"Males as a group have and do benefit the most from patriarchy, from the assumption that they are superior to females and should rule over us."*

   The statement above is an excerpt from the book *'Feminism is for Everybody'* by Bell Hooks (2000). Based on this statement, provide four instances (and explain each one supported with excerpts from the text) from the story above that reveal the existence of a patriarchal society. (12 marks)

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Question II: Short story (30 marks)
Read the excerpt below and answer all the questions that follow.

The Champion Bullfighter
by Othman Kelantan

Mamat recalled the recent events. Exciting! He was a professional with much experience, and not easily deceived. He could tell for sure; he could read each of Pak Isa's bulls like a book especially Langsat. Despite his enormous strength, Langsat could be beaten. Mamat tried to get a close look at Langsat when he was led into the arena.

"What law says you can inspect the bull you're about to fight?" objected Pak Isa, his face flushed red with anger. He straightened Langsat's batik head covering; he adjusted its fold. The two attendants watched like hawks. The crowd looked on anxiously. Mamat didn't care. He wanted only to grab hold of Langsat's body. Pak Isa protested again. Then Lamin the headman, quickly gave a warning.

"You can look all you want, but don't touch him. That's our law. It's always been that way."

Pak Isa stared angrily at Mamat. His glaring eyes seemed to say, "You heard him. Now obey the rules."

"I can tell," Mamat immediately responded, "Langsat was sired in Kijang. I can see the brown stripe on his back, and the one that runs from his navel to his testicles." Pak Isa stared even harder. With a look of seriousness on his face, Abang Lazim, who was from Sumatra, asked,

"What's that got to do with our chances of winning?"

"That bull is easy to trick, but he's tricky too," replied Mamat while looking straight at Pak Isa's champion bull. "He's a killer but so what? Sure his horns are sharp, but if Chalet can get to him on the second charge, we'll win. Don't worry". Mamat could tell that Abang Lazim was confused. The explanation had not helped him at all. This was a fight to the death.

"If Chalet can stand Langsat's first charge, we're certain to win. Certain!" Mamat shouted, pointing a finger to the sky. Abang Lazim nodded in agreement.

Mamat patted Chalet on the rump. He had not yet removed the coverings that protected the bull's horns. Chalet snorted. He bellowed. Pak Isa's bull pawed at the ground. The crowd gathered. What a battle this would be! A fight to the death! As for Mamat - if Chalet should lose – he would retire from bullfighting, as he had retired from the political arena. For a moment he regretted he had not decided to use Aral, his young bull that had never been entered in a competition. But Aral was still too young. His horns and body were strong, but he lacked experience. Perhaps Aral would die on Langsat's horns. So he brought Chalet. Chalet had already won four fights.

"Ready?" Lamin asked Mamat. Mamat looked over towards Pak Isa and his two assistants who were patting Langsat on the rump. Their skill would determine the bull's ability to fight.

"Ask him," Mamat answered. His heart pounded fiercely. Langsat stretched his body, showing his powerful neck. His horns were deadly weapons. But Langsat would tire quickly, if he didn't win in the first two rounds.

"Ready?" Lamin shouted to Pak Isa. Pak Isa and his two attendants came to the center of the arena to receive instructions from the headman regarding the fight.

"We're friends." Lamin reminded them, "Victory and defeat are all part of the game. Who will come to the center of the ring first?"

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Abang Lazim pushed Mamat forward, and Pak Isa came forward voluntarily. Mamat's heart skipped a beat. He suddenly remembered the vow he had made regarding politics. If he lost the election he would retire. Then, unexpectedly just as he was confident of victory, he was defeated. So Mamat retired, after a political career of almost twenty years.

"Don't worry. I'll continue to give you my support," he said in his farewell speech to his political party, "I'm still with you. But my life-long gamble has finally come to this. Carry on the fight. I've gambled and lost; the people don't want me." And now he had taken up bullfighting.

"There's not much difference between the bullfighting arena and the political arena," Mamat thought for a moment.

"Bullfighting and politics are just alike. They are both a gamble. If your bull loses, you lose; if your political party loses, you lose. Politics and bullfighting are just alike". Mamat was awakened from his thought by Lamin, who called out for him to lead his bull into the ring.

Mamat was cautious. He would have to be a little slow releasing Chalet. He must do it that way. But that was tricky. Perhaps Pak Isa would protest afterwards. But what would be the use of protesting, if Langsat was already dead? Yes, Mamat would have to be very cautious.

When Lamin yelled out, "Go!" Mamat pretended not to hear, but Pak Isa released Langsat at that very moment. Langsat rushed out like a cyclone. Mamat released Chalet. He noticed how Chalet caught Langsat's two sharp horns with his own two powerful horns. Then Chalet twisted, while Mamat bravely ran out, cheering him on. Chalet continued to twist, giving Langsat no chance to gore him.

Pak Isa protested. His friends protested. "That's not fair! That's cheating. Why didn't you release your bull? It's a dirty trick! A dirty trick!" Pak Isa and his crowd stared at Mamat, at the same time getting their gruesome weapons ready.

Lamin led Chalet away by the nose ring; Pak Isa did the same with Langsat. The contest was interrupted by some ugly remarks made by the men who were betting on Pak Isa. Mamat's friends yelled back that they were ready for anything. The rough talk quickly stopped when Lamin announced that Mamat had cheated. Mamat would be given one more chance; but if he cheated again, he would lose the contest and be fined ten thousand baht's.

Mamat had not used up all of his tricks. It was true that he had lost the election, that he had been defeated in politics. But he was determined not to lose this match; he was a professional at bullfighting. He had to test out his theory about the way it should be done. The bull must be released a bit earlier this time, at a slight angle from the right. If he was lucky, Chalet would then twist Langsat's horns toward the left. Chalet would be certain to win. Certain!

Just as soon as the starting signal was given, Mamat released Chalet, as he had planned. Langsat rushed out with horns downward. Chalet aimed at his opponent's forehead, and struck him squarely in the face with his sharp, deadly weapons. Then he began to twist at Langsat's head. Mamat cheered him on as though he were in a trance, while Abang Lazim jumped around like a monkey. A strange feeling of victory came over Mamat as he watched white foam flow from Langsat's mouth. Chalet had not been injured; he was still twisting at Langsat, who was unable to defend himself because of the direction of the attack.

Pak Isa raised his hand in defeat. He realised now that Langsat was no match for Chalet; he knew defeat was inevitable. Mamat and those who had bet so heavily on him cheered and roared as loud as they could. They called him the champion bullfighter.

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Mamat wanted to tell his wife. Minah must be told. She must hear how he was able to win such a glorious victory with the bull he had trained. He would give her all the money he had won. Every cent of it. Every last cent!

But where were Minah and the children? Mamat reached down to touch the money that filled the pockets of his trousers. This victory was perhaps the most significant moment in all his life. If he were to be shot dead now, or to lose the next time, that wouldn't matter. He was satisfied.

Mamat thought of himself. He had worked like a slave in the cause of freedom. He had demanded that elections be held, and for his efforts he had received nothing but threats and insults. Then his country gained its freedom. How proud he felt! But government appointments had certain educational requirements which he lacked. Before the war he had gone only through grade two in an English school.

Although, he could read English, he was not considered an 'intellectual', because his name was not followed by any degrees. Because of what he had done for his country, he was nominated to run in the first election but he lost. Then the second election came, and he lost again. So he was treated like a bull that fights in the arena – as his strength diminished, he became less and less esteemed.

Mamat's thoughts continued. As new personalities came on the scene, he was very subtly ignored. He was conscious of what was happening so he retired. At that time he was only a little more than fifty years old. He then moved to Bangnara, because he had a number of relatives who lived near there. His daughters had all married political leaders in Malaysia, but one by one they left their husbands and came to live with him. And here, where the 'politics' of bullfighting runs hot in a man's veins. Mamat had thrown his hat into the ring. Now he had won. Not even the best were able to trick him.

How proud he was, how very proud! But where was Minah? Where were the children?

"Minah! Minah!" Mamat shouted as loud as he could. He couldn't see a window open in his house anywhere. He didn't see Jusoh, who was now fourteen years old. Jusoh went to school at Pasir Mas, an English school.

"That's politics for you," Mamat said to himself, "you have to go to an English school even though you are Malay!"

Suddenly, Mamat's thoughts shifted to another subject. He thought of Chalet, who had fought with every ounce of his energy and had gained nothing from it. Even though he had won, he would still be led around by his nose-ring. That's the way it had been with Mamat himself. He had fought for freedom with all of his strength, but when it was won, he had gained nothing from it.

"Jusoh! Jusoh!" Mamat yelled again. He had to tell his wife and children of his victory. He just had to pile up his winnings in front of their eyes. He was the champion bullfighter.

"Jusoh! Jusoh!" There was not a sign of life anywhere. Where was everyone? He knew that Minah always stayed at home whenever he went to the bullfights. That she always greeted him with a face as sour as vinegar. That she would say. "Hai 'Papa Bull' has come home." But where was she now? She wouldn't greet him like that today. He had won thousands of bahts.

A feeling of disappointment now came over Mamat. He walked straight ahead. He squinted his eyes sharply to compensate for his failing sight. He was certain of it – there was no one in the house. As soon as Mamat started up the wooden steps that led into his house, he heard a terrible uproar coming from somewhere. At first, he paid no attention.

"Daddy!" shouted Jusoh, "Uncle Lazim...." And the boy's words died there.

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"What's wrong? Has something happened to Abang Lazim?" The words exploded from his mouth. His chest was pounding hard. Why was Jusoh running like that? Where were Minah and their divorced daughters? Mamat was frightened and confused.

"Somebody shot Uncle Lazim!" Jusoh shouted, scared half to death.

"Lazim shot?" Mamat was terrified. He had never known fear like this before. He jumped down, and moving as quickly as a wounded buffalo, he picked up Jusoh and held him tight.

"Mother and my sister are on their way home now. You left the bullfight before we did."

"My God," Mamat said to himself, "Minah and the children went to the bullfight." Maybe he had done wrong by leaving so soon after his victory. But Mamat didn't have time to think about it. Minah and the girls were already there standing at the fence.

"Abang Lazim is dead," Minah cried out, her face panic stricken. Mamat was speechless! Shocked! He picked up his gun and stared at the trigger. This gun would avenge Abang Lazim. Mamat knew what had happened. Either Pak Isa or some of his friends had shot Lazim. Just as Langsat had fallen victim to Chalet, so Lazim, his owner had fallen victim to Pak Isa. Around here life was as cheap as chalk. The noise he had heard earlier grew louder; and just as Mamat started to leave, he saw them bringing Lazim's body. Mamat also saw the anger in the eyes of Abang Lazim's friends. They would fight to the death to avenge his murder. Pak Isa and his crowd would all die like dogs.

Mamat had no chance to ask about Chalet, but he knew Chalet must also have been killed. Their murderers had run away, but there was no doubt who they were. They were friends of Pak Isa. Mamat moved quickly. Abang Lazim's body was already stiff; blood covered his chest.

As Mamat watched Abang Lazim's body being lowered into the ground, he could not hold back his tears. Lazim had gambled his life. And he saw them bury Chalet not far from Lazim's grave, Mamat recalled his pre-political struggles. Chalet had died after winning for those who had bet on him. A country's independence should be victory for those who fought for it. Lazim symbolized people who had fought for independence, people who had struggled and died for others who had done nothing more than bet. Abang Lazim and Chalet were exactly like those people who had risked their lives for independence. After the battle was over, they were soon forgotten. The real winners were those who had not fought, but had only bet.

Mamat was sure of it – politics and bullfighting are just alike!

(Adapted from http://www.antiessays.com/free-essays/The-Champion-Bullfighter-456116.html)

1. *"Bullfighting and politics are just alike. They are both a gamble. If your bull loses, you lose; if your political party loses, you lose. Politics and bullfighting are just alike".*

   Discuss the idea of male pride with reference to the above statement made by Mamat. (6 marks)

2. Discuss how the Malay men are stereotyped through the character of Mamat as the protagonist of this story. Provide three evidences from the story. (6 marks)

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3. *The position of English in Malaysia with its ethnically diverse population is highly controversial, particularly in education. The natural reaction of countries that attain their independence is to shift, to create an identity for themselves, a national identity and in Malaysia's case, post-Independence- there was also this need to move away from the association with the colonial power.* (Saran Kaur 2011)

   How is English and English education viewed upon in this text? Support your answers with evidences from the text. (6 marks)

4. State and elaborate on two cultural differences and two cultural similarities between the Malay family in *A Champion Bullfighter* and the Indian family in *A Story of a Dowry* . (12 marks)

End of Paper.